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National Intelligence Council

FIDEL CASTRO'S DEEPENING CRISIS
THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE "OCHOA-DE LA GUARDIA AFFAIR"

Recent purges and executions of high-level officials have resulted in the most spectacular upheaval in the Cuban leadership since Castro took power.

It is dramatically more dangerous to the stability and continuity of the regime than any previous domestic crisis.

-- Castro is gambling that he can contain the damage done to the loyalty and reliability of the security services, but has never before conducted such a purge there.

-- He will also now have cause to fear that any number of senior military officers have been so deeply alienated that they will coalesce and move to overthrow him.

His dangerous gambit is intended to:

-- Eliminate a popular and distinguished general who had somehow threatened the regime's authority.

-- Enhance his and Cuba's international standing by becoming an evangelist against drugs.

-- Establish a basis for improving relations with the United States, and get relief from the economic embargo.

-- Improve Cuba's badly-strained relations withe the USSR.

This Memorandum was drafted by Brian Latell, Director of the National Intelligence Council [redacted] It represents his personal interpretation of recent developments, and was discussed with analysts in the Directorates of Intelligence and Operations.

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The purges and show trials of General Arnaldo Ochoa and 13 other military and security officers, together with other related initiatives by Fidel Castro, constitute the most spectacular upheaval in the Cuban leadership in decades. Since he won power in January 1959 the Cuban leader has imprisoned and disgraced--though rarely executed--scores of once powerful colleagues, but no other case since the Huber Matos trial in October 1959 compares in its gravity and implications to the one Castro has orchestrated against the still widely-respected and popular General Ochoa who was executed along with three other defendants on 13 July 1989.

The affair has many of the characteristics of political watersheds and crises of the past. Once again, for example, Castro has unleashed a tumult and placed himself in its calm eye. Until his speech to the Council of State on 9 July, he had remained almost entirely in the background, having delegated the prosecution of the case to his brother, Armed Forces Minister Raul Castro, and to other generals. He cancelled plans to attend the presidential inauguration in Argentina on 8 July, and has prevented foreign journalists from covering the story in Havana or interviewing him or other officials. During his more than 40 years in public life, such tactics--combined with his usually reliable intuition and proclivity to act boldly--have invariably kept Castro's adversaries disorganized and confused at critical junctures, while allowing him to retain the initiative.

Dangers to the Regime's Twin Pillars

But the Ochoa affair is dramatically more dangerous for Castro than any previous domestic crisis. Since Matos was imprisoned in 1959, no other popular officer who had commanded major military units has been so disgraced. Ochoa, one of Cuba's most popular and decorated military heroes, has impeccable revolutionary credentials and enjoyed the respect of his peers. Even if he did undertake drug deals that were unauthorized, he may not have done so for personal profit as the regime charged. Former Air Force General del Pino, who defected to the United States in 1987, has said publicly that it is "virtually impossible" that Ochoa could be linked to drug trafficking, and at least some ranking Cuban officers may believe that as well.

In any event, revelations by both Fidel and Raul Castro suggest that Ochoa's principal "crimes" were in questioning the Castros' authority and contemplating defection after he was informed in late May that he would no longer command troops but instead be assigned to Raul Castro's staff. Fidel Castro may

have concluded that Ochoa had to be convicted of truly heinous crimes, rather than personal or political ones, in order to discredit him so completely as to preclude any backlash that could generate serious discontent in the military.

Castro is also betting, moreover, that he can contain the damage done by the purges to the loyalty and reliability of the internal security and intelligence services in the Ministry of Interior (MININT). Eleven MININT officers have been convicted, including Patricio and Antonio de la Guardia--the former a general, the latter a colonel. Two, including Colonel de la Guardia were executed, and the others have been condemned to long prison terms.

For decades, MININT has been the most reliable and ruthlessly efficient bulwark of the regime, and it has never before been the target of such a purge. It seems certain, moreover, that it will be further traumatized under the leadership of General Abelardo Colome Ibarra, Cuba's highest ranking army general. He recently took charge from ousted minister Jose Abrantes

Although the dangers of destabilizing MININT are substantial, Castro probably thought he had no choice. He had to take forceful action to protect himself in the event that any operatives have been alienated and also from the possibility that organized opposition might have emerged in MININT's elite, uniformed services. Some MININT officials are likely to refuse to believe Castro's allegations that their colleagues were involved in drug dealing without his approval.

Castro did not make his claims any more credible, when, in an editorial he wrote for Granma, the official Communist Party daily, he described clandestine operations conducted by Antonio de la Guardia when he was chief of MININT's previously secret MC Department. In that capacity, de la Guardia "was authorized," Castro said, to smuggle embargoed goods from the United States into Cuba with the cooperation of other Cuban agencies. "These activities were entirely justifed and moral in view of the criminal blockade of the United States," Castro wrote. He went on to allege, however, that the de la Guardia group became a rogue operation when members unilaterally decided to expand their approved clandestine activities into drugs.

Many MININT and other Cuban officials are likely to conclude that Castro is lying in insisting he had no previous knowledge of official involvement in drug trafficking. Since the late 1950s the Cuban leader has been notorious for his insistence on personally controlling even minute details of programs in policy areas that interest him. During the two years he spent waging his own insurgency against the Batista regime, for example, Castro was known to have kept a running account of the exact number of bullets his guerrillas had in stock. During the 1960s and 1970s he drove audiences into stupefaction by reciting for hours myriads of statistics and technical details about such subjects as artificial insemination, sugar cane genetics, and soil chemistry. In this decade, among many other topics, he has endlessly lectured audiences about arcane medical procedures and health trivia, perhaps reflecting a growing preoccupation with his own mortality and declining vigor.

But it is unlikely that Castro micromanages any other realm as totally as the clandestine, intelligence, and special operations that enthrall him. noted, for example, that Castro personally insisted on approving every proposal for recruiting new agents abroad who might be used in support of subversive activities. that Castro "initiates, approves, and controls all Cuban support" under such circumstances. that Castro was heavily involved in managing Cuba's extensive counterintelligence operations against the United States, even to the extent of personally approving the details of reporting that was channeled through double agents. General del Pino, have provided similar perspectives.[1]

1. There are also a number of flaws and inconsistencies in the elaborate case the regime has presented that are likely to increase doubts about its veracity. For example, Fidel Castro asserted in a Granma editorial on 22 June that in response to US (and perhaps Soviet) complaints last April, he ordered the Interior Ministry to begin "rigorously" to investigate "...to see if a Cuban official was implicated in drug trafficking activities." He claimed, in addition, that as a result, "the de la Guardia group suspended their activities and began to dismantle their operations and protect themselves from inquiries." Castro has not tried to explain, however, that while the regime was able to get such quick and effective results in April, he did not order such measures in previous years in response to earlier US charges that Cuban officials were involved in drug trafficking.

Given his proclivities and interests, it seems quite improbable that Castro did not approve, and carefully direct the involvement of MININT's MC Department in drug dealing. He would certainly have been able to justify such a policy among the small number of officials involved and witting, and to have done so on the same basis that he justified the clandestine program to avoid the US embargo. Just as he has always been able to rationalize assassinations of his enemies and lethal violence in support of revolutionary causes in Cuba and elsewhere, he would have had no qualms about drug trafficking, believing that it was morally justified as a means of hurting the United States while earning hard currency that his country desperately needed.

Scattered reports from sources of varying reliability are compatible with this analysis. In February 1988, former Panamanian diplomat Jose Blandon testified before a Senate subcommittee that Castro attempted to mediate a drug deal involving Colombian traffickers and General Noriega in 1984.

Furthermore, despite determined efforts to control what was revealed during the show trial, Cuban authorities did not prevent one of the defendants, MININT Captain Ruiz Poo, from repudiating the regime's key claim. Ruiz publicly testified that narcotics trafficking was approved "at the very top." Seemingly as a result of his unexpected impudence, his prison sentence was increased by five years above what the prosecution had recommended.

Why Did Castro Provoke the Crisis?

Castro deliberately engineered this crisis. He has controlled the entire affair since its inception with the announcement on 13 June that Diocles Torralba, then a Vice President and Minister of Transportation, had been arrested.[2] Since then Castro has orchestrated its timing, pace, and intensity, as well as the extensive Cuban media coverage of it.

2. A Granma editorial published on 16 June indicated that the Torralba and Ochoa cases "are not directly related." A previously-distinguished regime veteran, Torralba, was charged with "immoral, dissolute, and corrupt personal behavior," but not with drug trafficking. In reality, it appears that his principal "crimes" are that he and former General Ochoa have been intimate friends at least since the 1960s when they studied together in the Soviet Union, and that a daughter is married to Antonio de la Guardia.

Since the affair involves so many unprecedented risks, it seems difficult on the surface to explain why he decided to launch it. Such bold and dangerous undertakings have not been unusual for Castro, however, and the present Ochoa-de la Guardia affair is similar to other "crises" he provoked in the past. Choosing the timing and circumstances carefully, Castro has unleashed an ambitious but dangerous gambit encompassing both domestic and foreign policy objectives. He intended to:

-- Eliminate a popular and distinguished general who had somehow challenged the regime's authority, and make Ochoa and the other defendants examples for anyone else who would question his hegemony. There is no evidence linking Ochoa to coup plotting or other organized anti-regime activities, but the Castros would have considered any dispute with him over a major policy issue as a serious challenge. General del Pino has speculated publicly that Ochoa and Torralba were sympathetic to Soviet-style reforms that Castro has rejected.

-- Evade personal responsibility for the most objectionable charges--helping drug traffickers--that have tarnished Cuba's international reputation. Castro may well have believed that credible allegations that he or other top officials were implicated in drug dealing would soon be made public.

-- Enhance his and Cuba's image and maneuverability internationally by adopting an aggressive, righteous campaign against drug trafficking. Castro probably now intends to become an evangelist in a highly publicized campaign against drugs.

-- Establish a basis for improving Cuba's relationship with the United States, with a view especially toward getting early relief from the economic embargo. Castro recognizes the salience of the drug issue in the United States, and probably believes that his offers to promote bilateral cooperation will be attractive and divisive.

-- Improve Cuba's badly strained relations with Moscow and reduce the prospects that Gorbachev will decide to cut the approximately $5 billion Cuba has been receiving annually in economic assistance. In particular, Castro fears that the United States and the Soviet Union will negotiate Cuba's fate without his knowledge. He may want to reduce Cuba's visibility as an irritant in East-West relations.

This is a typically maximalist Castro gambit. He is counting on his ability once again to persuade important elites and leaders abroad of his sincerity and strength. He probably intends that international audiences, especially in Washington and Moscow, believe that he and the Revolution have reached a constructive and cooperative turning point. He seeks, at a minimum, to reduce the US and Soviet pressures that have been steadily building over the last few years, hoping in particular that he can prevent the United States from going ahead with plans to begin television broadcasting to Cuba. Further, he is anxious once again to play a major role on the world stage--one he has been denied in recent years.

But the chances are negligible that Castro will be willing to make any significant concessions to either Great Power on contentious issues of considerable importance to him. He would refuse, for example, to forswear his commitment to continue supporting revolutionary causes abroad. And he will not take any significant steps that would weaken his personal control in Cuba. The regime's widely popularized motto of the last year or two--Socialism or Death--is meant to dramatize Castro's defiance of critics in both the United States and the Soviet Union.

Castro also has compelling domestic reasons to have embarked on the perilous course he has set. His popularity and legitimacy have fallen to their probably lowest levels ever, due to his increasingly harsh and confrontational policies. Meanwhile Cuba has been experiencing its gravest internal problems since he won power: severe economic constrictions, serious generational discontinuities, rising crime, social unrest, and even the emergence for the first time since the early 1960s of small pockets of vocal opposition. Castro and the regime have also been damaged by the defections of a number of senior officials over the last several years, and by the harsh criticisms--particularly of official corruption in Cuba--that some have voiced on Radio Marti.

As Cuba's internal problems have worsened, moreover, Castro seems to have become increasingly isolated from the masses and less adept at mobilizing and inspiring them. He has often hectored and berated audiences as his standards of revolutionary purity and probity have become more exacting. And during the last three years or so, as he has waged his radical rectification campaign to extirpate all manifestations of private enterprise and "illicit profiteering," he has blundered and misunderstood the popular will more than ever before.

Ochoa: A Popular and Respected Victim

Given his previously-exalted status, popularity, and recent grace under pressure, General Ochoa threatened more than any other ousted Cuban official since Matos to become the focus and inspiration of anti-Castro cabals. A veteran of Castro's insurgency in the late 1950s, he traced his legitimacy to the genesis of the Revolution. Then, beginning in the early 1960s, he began to serve in guerrilla and military struggles in several countries in Africa and Latin America, ultimately becoming Cuba's most decorated and distinguished "internationalist."

During the proceedings against him, Ochoa noted that he had lived most of his adult life abroad, a subtle reminder of how loyally he had supported Castro in some of Cuba's most extraordinary foreign policy successes. Because of his accomplishments and style, the general had become one of the country's most respected and popular officers, a veritable hero in a pantheon where only Fidel and Raul Castro and various martyrs enjoy such status. Raul Castro indirectly admitted as much in his speech on 25 June to the military honors tribunal when he said "we were receiving reports of his unlimited popularity in recent months."

On at least one occasion, Ochoa was described in the official media with a measure of respect more than a week after his arrest. On 20 June, the Cuban press agency acknowledged that "no one ever saw Ochoa flaunting luxury automobiles, living in mansions, sporting jewelry or new clothes. On his vacations in Cuba he behaved like any other citizen, even waiting on lines at the grocery store." This description was utterly at odds, however, with Raul Castro's widely disseminated claim on 25 June that Ochoa was "blinded by vanity" and "deliriously self-indulgent."

It was probably in part because of such inconsistencies that the regime published a shrill editorial on 3 July in Granma that was most likely drafted by Fidel Castro himself. It protested unconvincingly that "nobody doubts the veracity of the accusations nor the guilt of the accused. Many little counterrevolutionary groups abroad...have begun to exalt Ochoa as a political dissident...an innocent victim, a new Huber Matos who must be saved at all cost."

It has no doubt hurt the regime, moreover, that throughout his ordeal, Ochoa's performance was more sure and skillful than those of some of his accusers. While fatalistically

accepting the inevitability of the death sentence as the duty of a loyal revolutionary and denying that he had had political disagreements with Castro, the general also denounced what he said were lies presented in testimony against him. He insisted that everything he did was intended constructively to serve the armed forces and the regime. "You can be 100 percent sure," he told the court martial, my "sole interest" was "to benefit Cuba."

At times Ochoa bantered cleverly with both the prosecutor and his so-called defense counsel. Ochoa seemed to reproach the former on one occasion, for example, for delving into operations in Angola that Ochoa apparently believed were still too sensitive to be aired in public. He also took the initiative with his counsel, prompting him at one point to ask another question after the colonel had only reiterated hostile and incriminating ones.

Toward the end of the interrogation Ochoa made remarks that might have been intended to suggest that he was participating in an elaborate kangaroo court rather than an honest trial. The general once again took responsibility for "treason," but his response to his counsel's request to explain how his actions had adversely affected Cuba were curious. Ochoa left it to his listeners to determine whether he meant to be mordantly critical of Castro or utterly obsequious. "We were making a liar out of the commander in chief," the general said. "What is more serious than that?"

Furthermore, Ochoa denied some of the charges against him. He insisted, for example, that there was nothing illegal or immoral about his various activities in black marketing and commodities trading, and that all of the profits were to be spent in behalf of his troops or to help in Cuban economic development. He no doubt meant to insinuate, moreover, that such practices have long been common among Cuban troop commanders abroad, and that they were condoned by the regime. The prosecutor, in fact, partially conceded the point, when he commented that "maybe we could forgive the searching for diamonds, or even the Congo ivory business, but drugs, Ochoa?"

Castro of course recognizes that the burden of proof is on him to demonstrate that Ochoa's crimes were personal (drugs and profit) and not political (power and influence). A Granma editorial on 16 June made his case succinctly: "We should say that it has never been indicated that Arnaldo Ochoa and...his accomplices have been implicated in political activities or acts of treason against the Revolution."

Surprisingly, however, Raul Castro has considerably confused that key issue--to the detriment of the regime's objectives. In a speech on 14 June to a large audience of top military officers which constituted the first detailed denunciation of Ochoa, the younger Castro did not even mention that the general had been or would be charged with drug trafficking. In that often rambling and incoherent presentation, as well as in a more controlled speech on 25 June before the military honor tribunal, the Armed Forces Minister actually spoke at considerable length about Ochoa's political and personal offenses. The latter was said to be guilty, for instance, of "corrosive verbosity," a peculiar complaint considering that Fidel Castro has talked more on the public record than any political figure in history.

Raul Castro also asserted that Ochoa had unrevealed disagreements with the regime over Angola, and that he had been "blinded by vanity during crucial moments of the war." The general "would sometimes present himself as a victim," Raul Castro charged, "saying, 'I have been sent to a lost war so that I will be blamed for the defeat.'" Castro also strongly implied that the general had in fact harbored political ambitions that came into conflict with his authority and that of his brother. He claimed, for example, that Ochoa had posed as "a military and political strategist, a savior of the republic. ."

These unmistakable indications from Fidel and Raul Castro that Ochoa had become too ambitious and threatening to their hegemony were only the latest evidence, moreover, of the general's political eclipse. He had been passed over at the Third Communist Party Congress in 1986 for a seat on the Politburo, even though more junior and less distinguished generals were advanced. Both Castros have asserted that by the end of last May they had decided that Ochoa's military career had also peaked. On 29 May, Raul Castro informed Ochoa that he would not be given command of the important Western Army (with responsibility for the Havana area) and that instead he would become a personal aide without portfolio.

In that meeting, and in a second one alone with Raul Castro on 1 June, Ochoa must have made incriminating statements. Raul Castro has revealed that secret transcripts of the two conversations were entered into evidence against Ochoa, and this suggests that the general threatened to do something extreme enough to result in his arrest.

The Impact on Raul Castro

Since they launched their insurrection in Cuba in 1953 the Castro brothers have been inseparable politically and ideologically through the entire revolutionary steeplechase. Lacking in charisma, and less than overwhelming personally, the younger Castro has totally tied his fate to that of his brother. But allegations through the years that he is ineffective, weak, and a mere stooge and executioner for Fidel Castro are misleading.

Raul Castro was one of the youngest and most effective guerrilla commanders during the insurgency, and it was in the area of his "second front" in easternmost Cuba where some of the most important political and military advances were made. A number of the regime's most influential military and civilian officials have been intimately associated with him since those days, and since the 1986 Party Congress these "raulistas" have constituted the largest single bloc in policy circles. As Armed Forces Minister and Fidel Castro's designated understudy and successor since 1959, the younger Castro has demonstrated skill and leadership abilities in his own right.

Thus, his legitimacy and effectiveness are both derivative--to the extent that they depend on Fidel Castro's patronage--and autonomous to the extent that they have been developed through his own networks and accomplishments. In recent years, as the "raulistas" have been delegated greater influence and Fidel Castro has been seemingly more concerned with ensuring his brother's succession, the latter has assumed a more prominent public role than in the past and has demonstrated greater interest in civilian affairs. Thus, his autonomous legitimacy seems to have increased.

Furthermore, one immediate result of the Ochoa affair is that Raul and the "raulistas" who control the miltary have considerably strengthened their position. The new Minister of Interior, General Colome, is Cuba's only three-star general and thus third in the chain of command below the Castros. Veteran "raulista" generals Senen Casas Regueiro and Rogelio Acevedo Gonzalez are, respectively, the new interim Minister of Transportation and head of civil aviation. Appointments of other generals closely linked to Raul Castro are also likely. Thus, as the military wields increasing influence in civilian and internal security affairs, Raul Castro's power will probably continue to expand in an increasingly praetorian regime.

Nonetheless, Raul Castro's longer-term prospects to survive long as his brother's heir have probably been seriously damaged by the Ochoa affair. The younger Castro performed poorly in his important appearance before hundreds of top officers on 14 June, and was described in the media as having been so "exhausted and emotionally overwrought when he made the announcement of the charges...that many people continued to disbelieve it, speculating on some kind of political infighting or disagreements." At times rambling incoherently, he denounced the United States, admiringly mentioned Stalin, and berated Ochoa for, among other things, being "untouchable." And in his speech on 9 July before the Council of State he described how he had cried one night during the crisis.

But it was his frequent and grotesquely excessive paeons for his brother that no doubt reinforced, for at least some in his audience, the extent of his dependence on Fidel Castro, especially at such critical junctures. The younger brother insisted at one point that he "is not a yes man," though much of his message seemed to contradict the claim. Pounding the lectern, he effused that "our living symbol...the most important symbol we have is Fidel Castro."

Soon after, again pounding the lectern, he shouted, "Listen, Fidel is our father," and toward the end of the disjointed discourse spoke what for him was perhaps the inevitable corollary: "Let us be...humble children..." Although the performance was received with applause and shouts of "Fidel" at the appropriate moments, Raul Castro may never before have looked so ridiculous as the intended heir to the Revolution.

The Impact on the Military and Security Forces

Recent events have no doubt seriously harmed both the armed forces and MININT and over time are likely to result in challenges to the hegemony of the Castros. Senior officers in both services will now have greater cause to be concerned about activities that could provoke charges of mismanagement and misconduct and will be loath to appear too proud, become too popular, or be too innovative.

New doubts about the legitimacy and morality of both Castro brothers must have been aroused, and concerns about their ruthless, Stalinist methods and radical economic prescriptions surely have increased. Reservations already had been provoked, no doubt, because the majority of senior Cuban officers have had training in the Soviet Union and are aware of the reforms Gorbachev has been enacting there and inspiring and

endorsing in other Communist nations. There is no evidence that a pro-Gorbachev, anti-Castro clique has formed in the Cuban military or MININT, but the odds of that happening are growing.

The greatest short-term danger might well come from disgruntled MININT officers. Many intelligence and security officers will recoil from becoming subservient to the military and losing their status as the most privileged elite in Castro's nomenclatura. Military officers have long bitterly resented the greater privileges and benefits their MININT counterparts have received, and General Colome will have ample justification for imposing austerity and accountability while turning over top management of the ministry to a cadre of officers close to him. General del Pino has reported in some detail about military-MININT jealousies, and they were even inadvertently aired by one of the generals who sat on the military honors tribunal that tried Ochoa.

Military leaders have projected a solid front through the entire Ochoa-de la Guardia affair, and although tensions and doubts about both Castro brothers have probably been aggravated, organized resistance currently seems unlikely. There is no evidence of plotting, and increased fears of the wrath of the regime will probably discourage officers from discussing the merits of Ochoa's case. In addition, the government has effectively orchestrated media coverage to dramatize the solidarity and strength of the officer corps. During Raul Castro's 14 June speech, for example, television cameras repeatedly panned the auditorium that was packed with immaculately uniformed senior officers. The military tribunals that heard the charges against Ochoa were also carefully managed and televised in a way that emphasized the professionalism, unity, and strength of the military.

Nonetheless, a few subtle signs of independent thinking about Ochoa did surface in the voluminous trial transcripts. Although all 47 generals and admirals who sat on the honors tribunal issued personal statements condemning Ochoa, there were variations in the harshness of their denunciations and the severity of the sentences they recommended. Some did not call for the death penalty, and several seemed to go out of their way to speak of how much they had admired Ochoa. One spoke of him as a "charismatic, decisive officer;" another admitted he had been "filled with pride and admiration" for him; and a third observed that "Arnaldo knows he has been an idol for us." Although these officers joined in the unanimous

condemnation, some at least must feel a profound ambivalence and unease about the judicial quality of the proceedings, the veracity of the Castro brothers, and the outlook for Cuba under their continued rule.

Conclusions and Outlook

Fidel Castro's legitimacy as Cuba's hegemonic leader will be damaged at home and abroad by these events, perhaps severely. His and his brother's recent actions will spawn divisions in and between the military and security services. Both Castros are more likely now to be targets of assassination attempts. Yet with Abrantes, Fidel Castro's former long-time personal security chief, removed from office and with MININT undergoing purges and likely demoralization, the effectiveness and reliability of the regime's massive internal security organs will probably be degraded.

Castro will be forced to rely increasingly on the military to uphold his dictatorship. Senior officers will probably assume responsibility for administration in civilian areas beyond their areas of competence, and, as in the late 1960's, the Communist Party will probably be more conspicuously dominated by men in uniform. Militarization will have other negative repercussions: Soviet leaders will be more dismayed about the repressive image their client presents; many civilian technocrats and administrators will resent their reduced status; already disaffected youths may become more rebellious.

Perhaps most importantly, a more tyrannical Revolution, wielding the death penalty and imposing Castro's harsh visions through force, will further lose popular support. And, as he becomes more dependent on the military as his sole bulwark, Castro will have greater cause than ever before to fear that any number of senior officers have been deeply though silently alienated, and that they could coalesce eventually and overthrow him.

If Castro's bold gambit of late were to produce significant results--including relief from US and Soviet pressures--he would probably be able to weather the storm and preserve his hegemony by relying on the military. But he will have to start getting positive results soon, because Cuba's severe social and economic problems will not be easily ameliorated.

If his strategy fails, Cuba in all likelihood would become increasingly unstable. A more unpredictable and beleaguered Castro would probably also be more confrontational and inclined to launch other risky initiatives that would be likely to result in greater uncertainties in relations with the United States and the Soviet Union. And under those conditions, the Castro brothers' dictatorship would be increasingly precarious.

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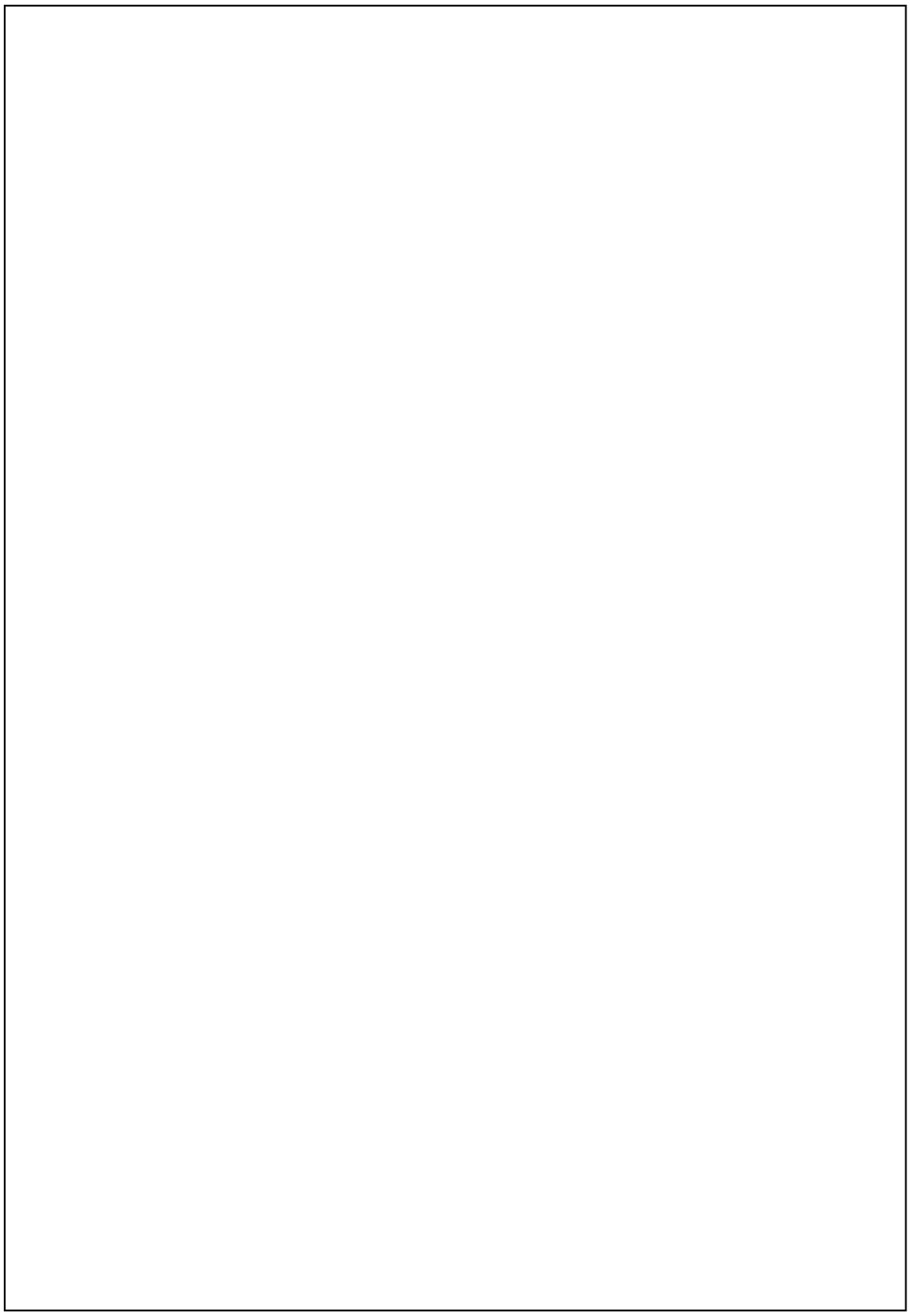

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